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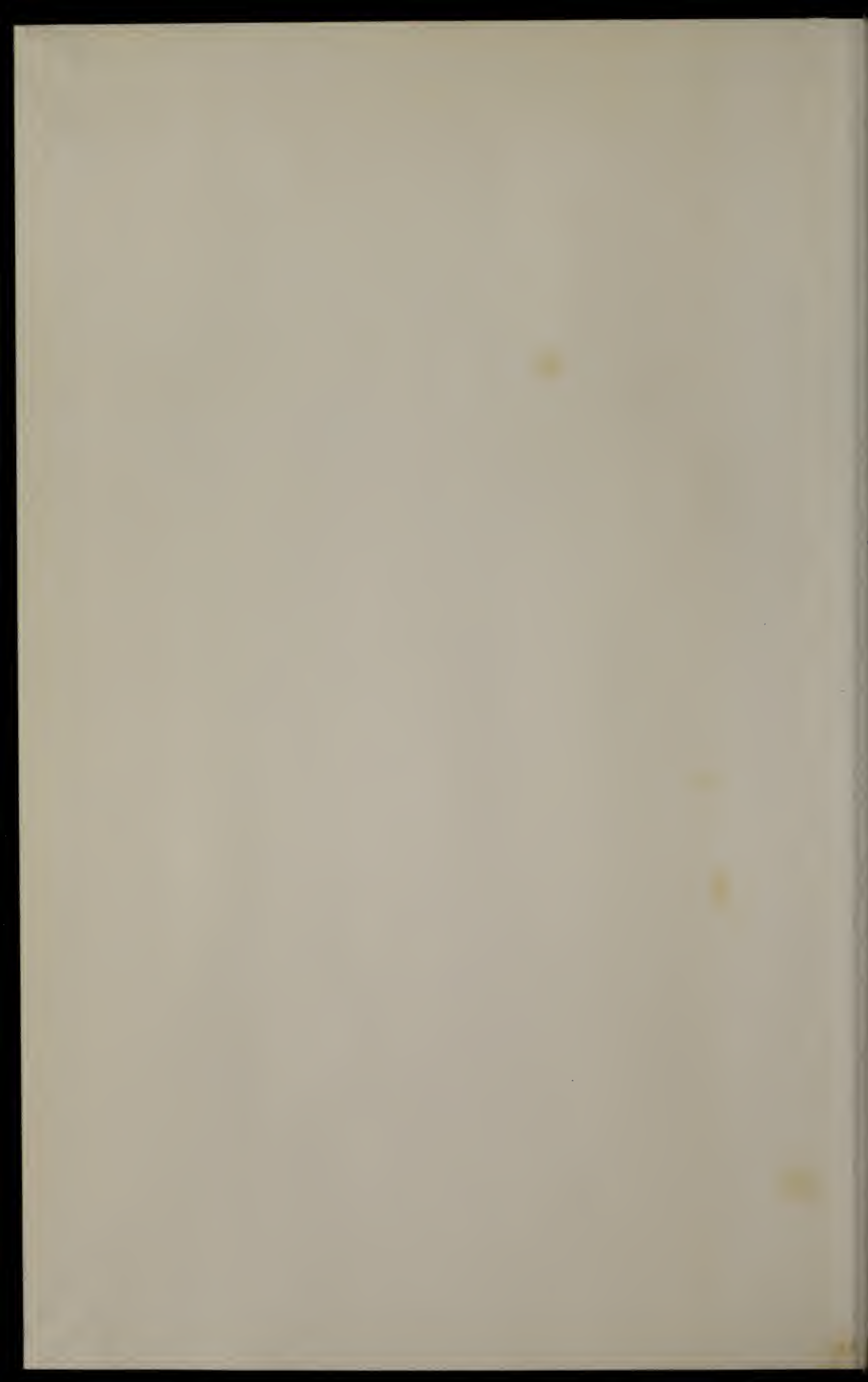
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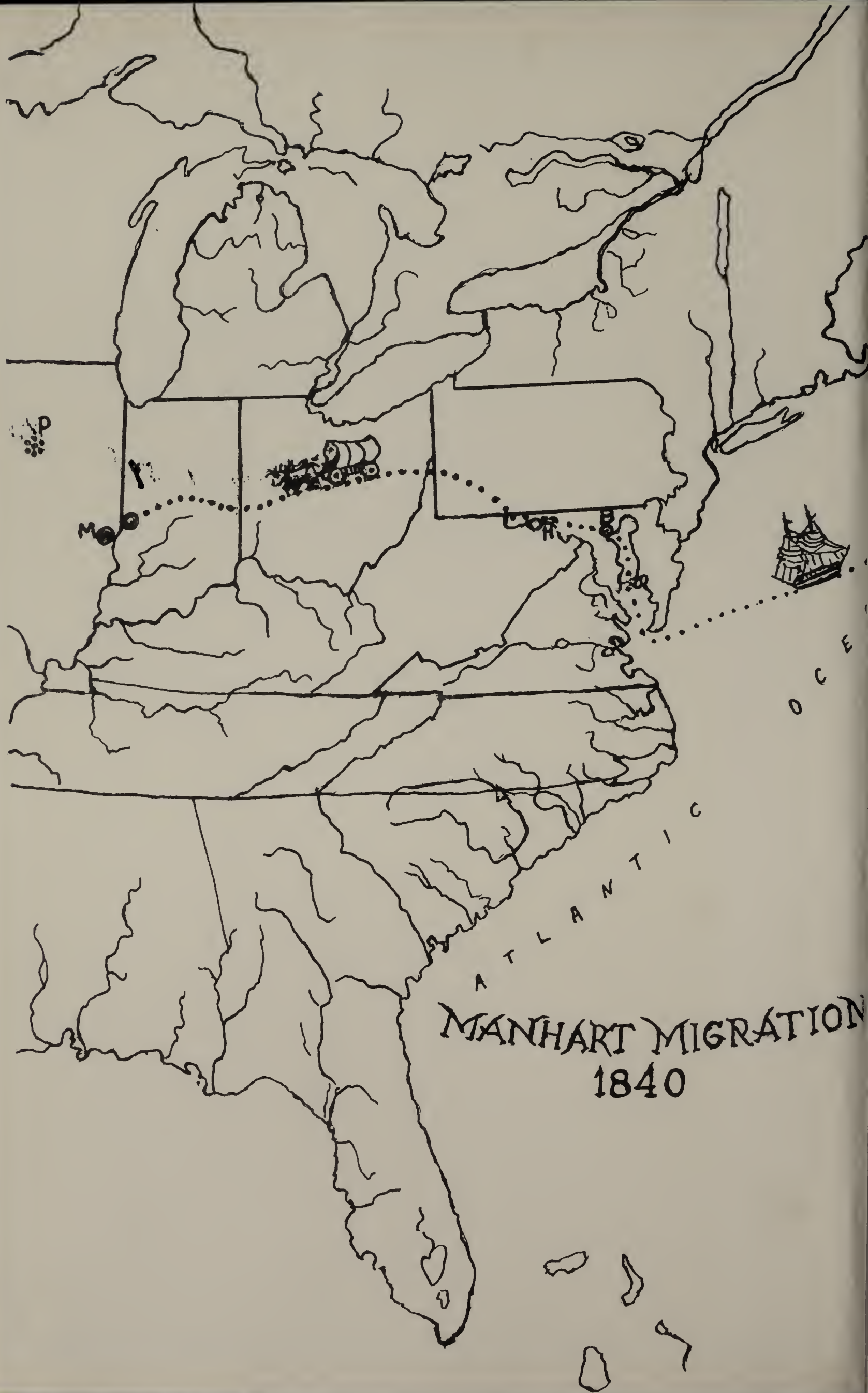
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MANHART
REUNION



MANHART MIGRATION
1840

To my good friend of long ago
with greetings from Linnile, who
was 80 on New Years day, and is now
making a good recovery from a
very serious operation last April.

Very sincerely

W. Harry Clay (ret'd)
January 1959



MANHART

REUNION

A TRUE STORY

By G Harry Clay

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Written and Published by G. Harry Clay
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Litho in USA by Wallace Clay



John George Manhart

To the Decendents of John George Manhart
(1783-1872)

Greetings:

2066213

"Reunion" is not used in the ordinary sense of a family or company gathering: rather it is in the special sense of a meeting of three elderly persons; viz. a brother and two sisters, after a separation of the brother from his sisters for a term of seventy-five years. During this seventy-five year period, their brother had not the slightest word or knowledge from his sisters or they from him.

It is doubtful whether modern history has a parallel incident on record. For this reason the author has taken particular pains to obtain his information directly from the participants and their families.

As a matter of fact, he knew of the separation having had help in the preparation of his High School German by his grandmother, Mrs. Eva Ann (Manhart) Stakeman. This was in the mid-nineties when she lived under the same roof with her daughter, the author's mother. Not once, but many times, would a word or phrase remind her of her childhood days, when her beloved older brother vanished from home on his way to work.

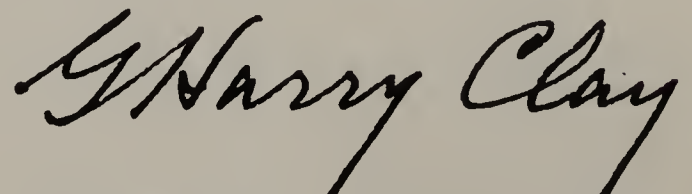
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Grandma's musings made a profound impression on the writer and he has no doubt that after sixty - five years she was still praying for her lost brother.

The Manhart Reunion occurred in the Spring of 1905. It was covered by articles in the local press and some metropolitan papers, but the articles were far from adequate and largely erroneous. Younger members of the Manhart families have written articles for school papers, but so far as the writer has been able to ascertain, no adequate account has been available to the numerous members of the Manhart clan.

And so, after some fifty odd years the writer, a grandson of Eva Ann (Manhart) Stakeman, assumed this responsibility, and is sincerely hopeful that the results will justify the time and effort expended.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "G. Harry Clay". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of "G", "H", and "C" being capitalized and prominent.

(Cousin) G. Harry Clay

THE MANHART REUNION

INTRODUCTION

John George Manhart (Johann Georg Mannherz) lived in or near the village of Wilfordingen, province of Baden in Southern Germany. The location is near the northern edge of the celebrated Black Forest, and about midway between Karlsruhe and Pforzheim.

The family, as of 1828, consisted of the father, two daughters by his first wife who died in Germany, his second wife, and a son and two daughters by his second wife. A document, becoming dim after one hundred thirty years, is the Passport, translated herewith, and also printed in facsimile (See Cut at rear of book).

Translated:

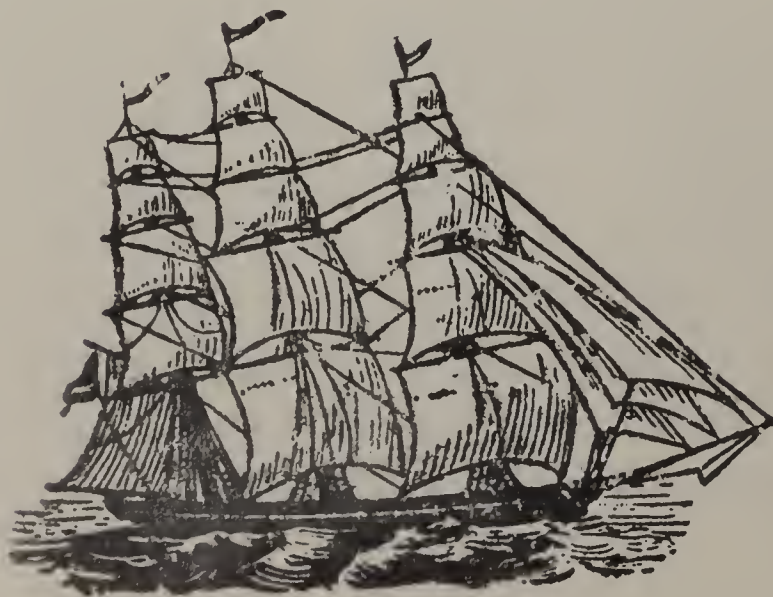
The Burgomaster of Wilferdingen allows the married couple (of) John George Manhart to emigrate with full permission of authority from here through the Netherlands by way of Mannheim through Rotterdam thence to America. 1st The husband John George Manhart is 44 years old, and the wife Anna Eva, nee Zachman, is 30 years old. 2nd Their children namely (a) Karoline, age 18, (b)

Barbara, age 13 3/4, (c) Esaias, age 8 3/4, Eva, age 7, and Margretha, age 3 3/4. 3rd This family has at their command an estate of one thousand gulden (*) in cash, provisions and effects. 4th There is no obstacle to the issuing of this pass to this family.

Wilferdingen
9th May, 1828

(*) 1000 Gulden equal to about \$500.00.

Original passport in possession of Miss Eva M. Clay of Terre Haute, Indiana.



CHAPTER I

OFF TO AMERICA

The passport may be considered as a key to the family, the home, the journey and the means of transportation. The journey was overland for a distance of fifty odd miles, by way of Karlsruhe; at Mannheim (head of year-round navigation of the River Rhine) they embarked on a barge, (sail boats were faster but expensive), and floated down the Rhine, and through one of the many estuaries to the great port of Rotterdam, Holland.

Here they engaged passage on a sailing vessel for the Atlantic crossing. Judging by historical records the Manharts were in the vanguard of the great German migration which followed the Napoleonic Wars, and reached a peak in the 1840's. During this period available shipping was employed to its utmost, and rigorous privations had to be endured due to the crowded conditions on the small sailing ships. (Large fast clipper ships came later, to be followed by steamships).

In the days of the wooden ships, passengers occupied the whole portion of the ship between the forecastle and the cabin. Moreover, in addition to their goods and general possessions,

they had to bring all their own provisions. The result was a jam-packed company of men, women, and children, with pens of poultry and livestock, bags, chests and what-not. Cooking and sleeping were matters of your own planning, and privacy was difficult to maintain.

Family tradition is quite united on ninety days as the duration of the voyage. That seems to be reasonable if 30 days are allowed for the over-land journey to the Rhine plus the float trip down to Rotterdam. There was probably some delay at Rotterdam in securing passage. Adverse winds and storms on the ocean, and sailing up Chesapeake Bay could easily bring the total to ninety days.

The mother was ill throughout the voyage, but survived to live about two months after landing at Baltimore.

In due time, John George Manhart married again. His third wife was Anna (R) Finkbiner, born in Germany, and about ten years his junior. It is thought she was of a neighbor family in the old country. (She may have been a widow).



The Manhart Teapot

CHAPTER II

SOJOURNE IN MARYLAND

AND

WESTWARD HO

Details of this period are hard to ascertain. It is known that a severe depression ruled the economic situation. Two older daughters married, one a Kircher, and the other a Niedheimer. Contacts with the western branch continued for a generation or more.

The Manharts remained in Baltimore, but time data is lacking on that score. Three sons were born to the third wife in Maryland, Lewis, then George, then John Martin (1836). The latter was born in Hagerstown. They remained there for several years awaiting the opening of the National Road. A Confirmation Certificate shows that Eva Ann Manhart was confirmed by the Lutheran Pastor at Hagerstown, Md. on the 28th day of April 1839.

One member of the family did not leave Baltimore with the family, viz; Esaias. He disappeared one day after leaving home to go to work for a dairyman. The mystery of his going was not cleared, nor was any trace of his whereabouts known for nearly seventy-five years. This separation and the eventual outcome is, of course, the burden of the tale, "Manhart Reunion".

The National Road, sometimes called the Cumberland Road (which it was not) was debated in Congress for years. In the early stages it was unopposed by the South, but later contested in fear that it would result in opposition to slavery in the new states north of the Mason & Dixon Line. Finally Congress dumped the project into the laps of the States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. It started as a masterpiece of engineering, but west of Indianapolis it reverted almost to "back-woods".

At any rate thousands of settlers stormed the road and the Manharts were presumably in the rush of 1840. Scenes on that portion from Indianapolis to Marshall were like a gold rush, except that this was strictly a road building operation, with tree cutters opening an 80 foot wide path, dragging the tops to right and left, removing the stumps from the middle 40 feet, the work continuing while the settlers crashed through. The statement was made that every night the campfires made two continuous lines on the roadsides.

The writer could find only one date verifying the arrival in Illinois; viz, that on May 18, 1840 at Marshall County seat of Clark County, John George Manhart took title to 40 acres of land. This land was later traded for a farm near West Union several miles south in the fertile valley of the Wabash River.

A few years after settling in Clark County, the daughters Eva Ann and Margaret went to Terre Haute.

Eva Ann was married to Charles Henry Stake-
man (born at Hochkirch, Prussia, 1818; died
1865). Five sons and two daughters were born.
All survived well beyond middle life except the
first-born Charles, who enlisted in the Union
Army when the Civil War broke out, although he
was one month less than 18 years old. He was
accidentally killed in bivouac by a comrade who
mistook his body for a log.

Margaret married Carl F. Seeman, and sur-
vived him by many years. Three sons and a
daughter survived infancy. John Seeman, the
youngest, visited his mothers birthplace at Wil-
ferdingen, Germany.



An American Log house

CHAPTER III

THE LAD VENTURES FORTH

Now, we come to the story of the lost brother, Esaias. Some sifting of various versions has been necessary, but the author believes that there now remain no serious discrepancies.

Esaias was nearly eleven years old. Hard times made it necessary for him to work. He had a job with a dairyman. He complained to his father that he could not endure the sight of blood (slaughtering was a sideline with the dairyman). His father promised to get him another job and after a delay of several weeks, succeeded. When he returned home with the good news, Esaias was gone. He had vanished completely. Hours and days grew into months and years, and not the slightest rumor was ever heard.

On that fateful morning, Esaias left home as usual but knowing that slaughtering was on the schedule for the day, he turned north on the York Turnpike instead of going to the dairy.

The boy walked along the busy highway which carried the commerce of the Port of Baltimore to central Pennsylvania, and products of the farms and factories of Central Pennsylvania to the city and Port of Baltimore. He began to tire and sat down to watch the scene, and eat his lunch. The weather turned cloudy as he started

on. Then rain began to fall, but his worries ended when the driver of a huckster wagon picked him up and gave him a ride. The boy explained he was on his way to some friends of his father. Before reaching York, the driver turned off.

Resuming his journey on foot, and wondering where he might stop, rain began to fall again. He took shelter in the corner of a stone wall. The wife of Jacob Spangler, a farmer, observed him and invited him in. He was given a meal and was put up for the night. The next day he was assigned to work on an onion bed, and so pleased the farmer's wife, that he was made chore boy, and given a place to sleep. When his new friends learned the circumstances of his home life they took the first opportunity to go back with him to Baltimore.

When they reached Baltimore, he was unable to find a trace of his family. Some one told him that his father had been killed while working on the new railroad. This ties in with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, completed in 1840, and the first railroad, though not steam, in America. His informers said the family had returned to Germany. (In later years he would tell his granddaughter that some day he would take her back and find them.)

Esaias returned to York County. He settled down to work as a chore boy, became a farm hand and later learned the carpenter's trade. He also developed a skill as an orchardist. York County, being predominately German, Esaias spoke English with a pronounced German accent.

(and significantly retained the final "z" on his name, pronounced "tz", while his father adopted the full American "Manhart".)

Esaias was industrious, sober, and thrifty, saving enough to buy a small farm. He farmed his own land and continued to work for Spanglers. On May 16, 1840 he was confirmed by Rev. Daniel Ziegler (sic) of the Reformed Church at York. On August 30, 1846 he married Miss Mary Heltzel, Rev. Ziegler officiating. Seven children were born to them, viz. John, David, Amanda, Jacob, Alice, Emma and Lewis H.

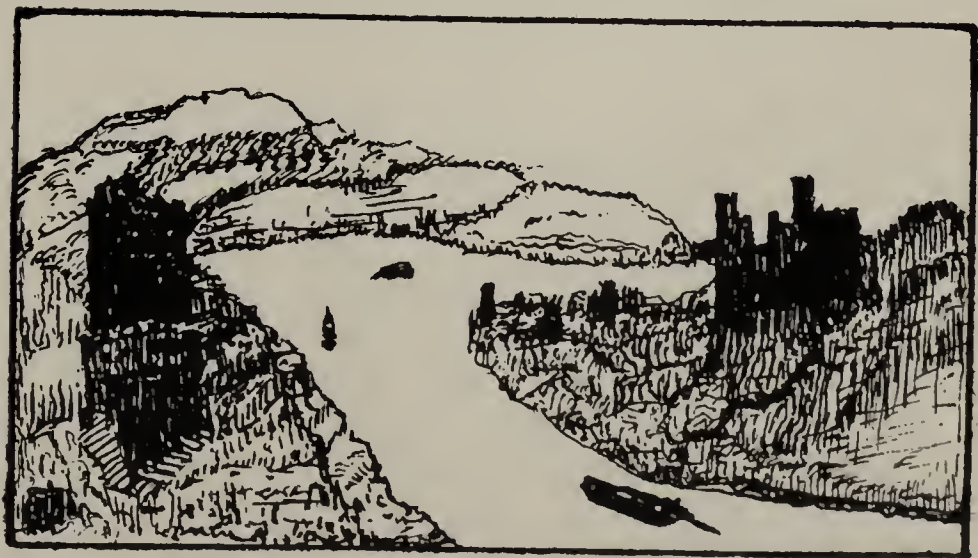
He was a constant reader of the Reformite Kirchen Zeitung, and the German Bible.

In 1863 a scourge of diptheria swept the community and in the space of six weeks, Esaias' wife and five children died. (This staggering blow may have been the reason for a wagon trip to Central Illinois shortly after the Civil War. In 1905, he mentioned the incident saying that he must have passed within sight of his sister's home on the return journey to Pennsylvania via the National Road.)

It was not until 1883 that he moved to Illinois. His son Jacob had married Tabitha Ann Genzler in 1875, and the couple came West with Esaias and his other son Lewis H. In 1885 the latter married Rebecca Boyer at her home in Ipava. The latter union was blessed with two daughters Lulubelle and Mary Esther. The two families lived on two farms near Ipava but after the death of the mother of the two girls the two families

lived on Jacob's farm about 50 miles from Peoria.

This was the situation in 1904. At the advanced age of 85 Esaias still maintained some activity in his specialty as an orchardist. His pride in the neat appearance of the farm was undiminished. Storm damage must be repaired immediately. He abominated anything indicating shiftlessness.



Floating down the Rhine



The distant cousins who looked alike.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOST IS FOUND

The odds against Esaias finding his sisters would approach infinity. The way it came about was fantastic.

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It was a Methodist Minister who set the machinery in motion for the Reunion. In August, 1904, the Rev. James Colyer, Pastor of the First M.E. Church of Canton, Ill., attended the annual Fulton County Sunday School Convention (interdenominational) which was held at Farmington, Illinois. Mr. Colyer had for a time been Circuit Pastor for the Clark County, Illinois, district of the Methodist Protestant Church where he became acquainted with the family of Al Manhartz, though the Manharts were not of his parish.

One of the delegates was Miss Lulabelle Manhartz. During the social hour, Mr. Colyer sought out Miss Manhartz and asked if she was related to the Manhartz family of West Union in Clark County. Without hesitation she replied, "No, we have no relations".

"Well," said Mr. Colyer, "It is very strange, for you look enough like Grace Manhartz to be her twin. You must write to her." Lulabelle wrote down the address and promised to write.

Returning to Ipava, she kept her promise, giving the name of her grandfather, and his age, 85, but no further details. After she had mailed the letter, her grandfather, sensing the

possibility that his people might be involved, began to review his life, and as it were to live his boyhood again. He called his granddaughter and said, "I must tell you something about my father, and if I have a sister living, she will know whether we are of the same family. While we yet lived in Wilferdingen, my father was hauling logs to Mannheim on a big sled. A chain broke, and a log rolled on his foot and mashed a big toe, so that it had to be cut off. Ask the people at Marshall if that means anything to them". Sharing in the sudden hope of her grandfather, Lulabelle rushed a second letter to Marshall.

But Grace Manhart had replied immediately and her letter passed Lulabelle's second note in the mails. Lulabelle became greatly excited when she received such a prompt reply. She glanced at the contents and cried out, "Grandpa, come. I've got the funniest letter. Sit down while I read it to you".

The old man listened, his eyes grew moist, and his voice trembled with emotion. "They are my own sisters, Eva & Margaret". (Both of the letters which passed in the mails had recounted the incident of the lost toe. Grace also informed Lulabelle that his sisters, Eva and Margaret, were still living.

Correspondence began between Lulabelle's father, Lewis H. Manhartz and his first cousin, John Seeman of Terre Haute (son of Esaias' sister Margaret.) Every fact of time, place, name and incidents of childhood, matched perfectly to confirm the first startling revelations.

CHAPTER V

Lewis Manhart came to Terre Haute in the fall of 1904 to make plans for a reunion in the Spring. He met his aunts and cousins in Terre Haute and then visited the numerous branches in Clark County, Illinois, and around Prairieton, Indiana.

Finally, on May 27, 1905, slightly less than seventy-five years (to the best of our knowledge) after Esaias Mannhartz left his home in Baltimore, he joined his two sisters, Eva Stakeman and Margaret Seeman, in a blissful reunion at the Seeman home at 818 Ohio Street, where she had lived ever since it was built in 1863. (*)

Margaret searched the wrinkled face for resemblance to the "red headed" brother who she remembered as he was at the age of eleven. She recounted how she had for years looked at every "red-head" she encountered, and particularly, how she made a practice on the journey on the National Road, of seeking him in every overnight camp. "Have you seen my brother," was asked over and over again.

The photograph of the three gentle souls should be convincing evidence of the truth of this story. The brother's white hair and "throat-warmers" (Pennsylvania style), and the prim dark hair of his sisters are in sharp contrast.

*Still standing in 1958 but remodeled in the 1940's.

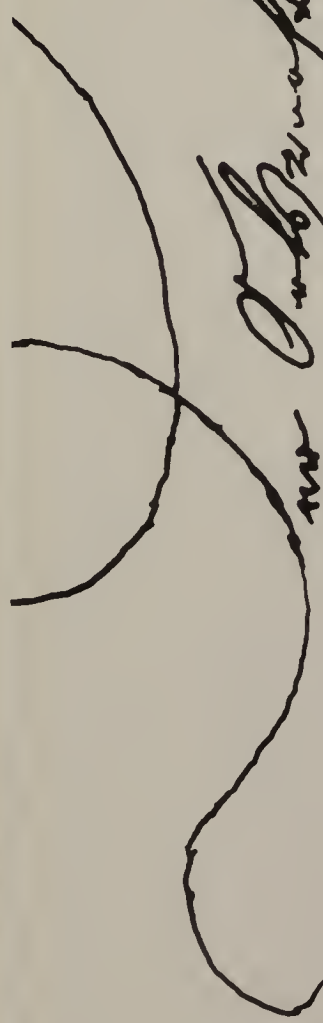


Then followed receptions at the Joseph H. Clay home, 401 South Eight, where Esaias' sister Eva lived with her daughter, the wife of Mr. Clay and at the home of Mrs. J. C. Kolsen's, Eva's other daughter, at 667 Poplar Street. Now for the first time in his long life, Esaias had the supreme joy of visiting his own kindred.

On May 29, the festivities were renewed at West Union, Ill., with a picnic at the home of L. Albert Manhart, a nephew of the "Reunion" Trio. Al, his good and capable wife Emma Prust Manhart, and their eleven children put on a real celebration. In the words of the light opera, by Gilbert & Sullivan, "sisters, aunts and cousins were numbered by the dozens."

Another celebration was held at the old farm home of John George Manhart, the father of the honored guests. This place was being farmed by Thomas Frank Manhart, son of Lewis Manhart, and father of Lewis F. Manhart (then a young man) who remembers the occasion well. The latter is now (1958) Professor of Business Administration at Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio.

The last phase of the "Reunion" occurred when Miss Lulabelle came to Terre Haute to meet her relatives there, and went on to West Union to meet her cousin Grace, oldest daughter of Al and Emma Manhart. The resemblance of these distant cousins noticed by the Reverend James Colyer is confirmed in the illustration printed in chapter 4.


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25 km Juni 1868.

Directorium des Mus. und Mus. d. Kunst

Verfugung des Bundesrathes



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